

Principle # 6

Protect environmental quality by minimizing impacts from human activities and planning for and maintaining natural areas that contribute to the health and quality of life of communities and people in New Hampshire

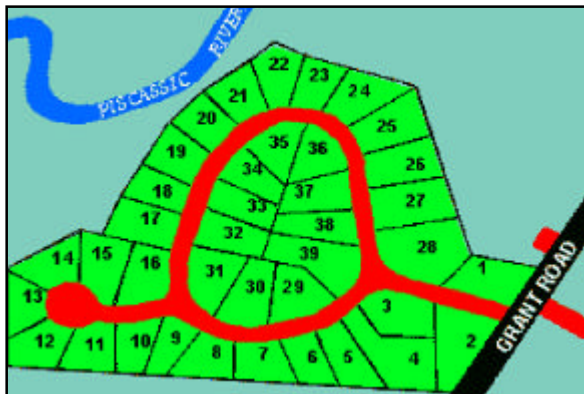
Case Study

Piscassic River Village, Newmarket

Clustered housing projects allow for smaller lot sizing, community water and sewer. Open space surrounds the housing, providing habitat for wildlife and maintaining natural areas for passive recreation.

Piscassic River Village is a 39 home, open space cluster development located off Grant Road (off Route 152) in Newmarket. The two-bedroom homes (maximum floor space 1500 square feet) are on municipal water and sewer.

A conservation easement protects nearly 12 acres of the 27.5 acre project, including over 2,000 feet of Piscassic River shoreline. The preserved open space, much of it upland, lies primarily at the rear of the property along the river. The Piscassic corridor is important bird and wildlife habitat, and preserving the undisturbed buffer area between the River and the development further reduces the amount of run-off pollution from the development that will reach the River. The homeowners association maintains walking trails.



The Newmarket Open Space Design Ordinance

The purpose of the Open Space Design Ordinance is to encourage residential subdivision designs which allow creation of high quality, traditional neighborhoods while protecting important components of the natural landscape. This goal is achieved primarily through reduction in lot sizing with the balance of land placed into common open space. The purpose of the open space must include one or more of the fol-

lowing:

- Protection of prime agricultural lands
- Protection of wildlife habitat
- Protection of open space for aesthetics or passive use
- Preservation of unique natural or man-made features.

The open space required must be at least 1/3 of the gross parcel area. The open space should be a contiguous area of

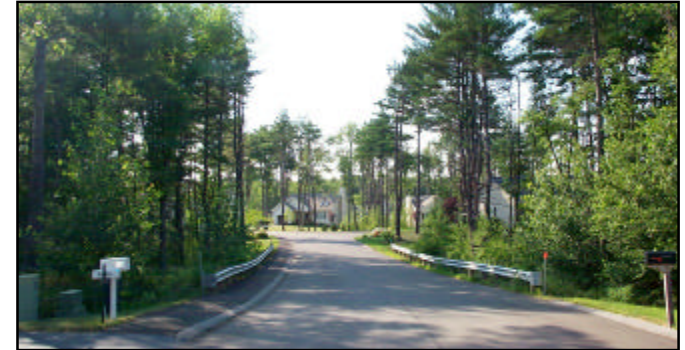
substantial size and should not simply be a thin strip surrounding the subdivision. The minimum required open space provided is five acres. Lot sizing is reduced by 50 percent in all districts where open space designs are allowed. Frontage requirements are reduced by a minimum of 50 percent. Setback reductions are also granted for open space design projects.

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Reduced setbacks from the road and between units help create a traditional village environment. Sidewalks are provided throughout, and a closed roadway drainage system helps protect the nearby water resources.

Landscaping and fencing provide buffering between units. Selective cutting during construction left mature trees in the landscape. Underground utilities service the development.



One primary flaw of the Piscassic River Village development results from the town's roadway design regulations requiring 24-foot pavement widths. A narrower right-of-way and pavement width would bring homes closer to the road, reduce impervious coverage and accompanying

runoff, and save more open space. Still, the protection of nearly 12 acres of open space exceeds the ordinance's required 9.75 acres. The project met the ordinance's goals of protecting natural resource while providing a passive recreational resource.

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Principle #6 Examples

Salt River, Stratham (1)

This 75-acre open space cluster residential condominium development was approved in 1979, one of the first in the Seacoast. The Rockingham County Conservation District holds the easement on the 45 conserved acres, mostly open land along the tidal Squamscott

River and its salt marshes. The protected land buffers the River and salt marsh, providing environmental, passive recreational, and aesthetic benefits. Pathways from the common areas lead to the protected open land, and down to the shore of the River.



Salt River, Stratham (2)

Six buildings - each with six, two- bedroom units - are clustered in a wooded area. Separate entrances use a common walkway and parking lot. Each unit has a parking space behind the unit and one in garage buildings, plus additional overflow parking.

Salt River is serviced by a community water system and common septic systems. Take Depot Road from Route 33 in Stratham and then a left into Salt River.

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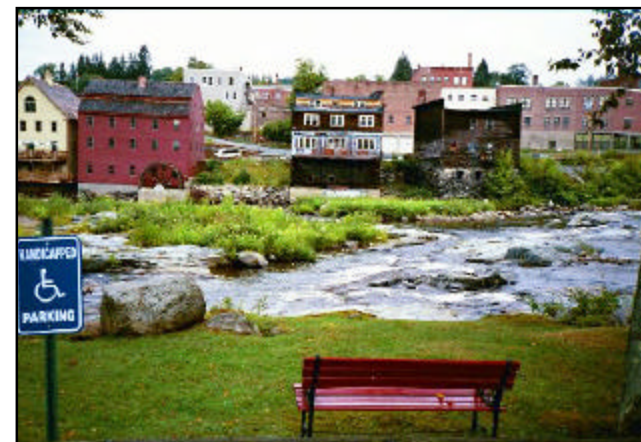
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Principle #6 Examples

Riverfront Pocket Park, Littleton

This park in front of the Littleton Area Senior Center and next to River Glen looks across the Ammonoosuc to downtown Littleton. Take I-93 Exit 41 onto Cottage Street, then left between Rocky's Video & New England Glass. Several pocket parks provide public access to the

river in downtown Littleton. In summer the parks are popular with swimmers. A planned \$1.2 million Riverwalk, funded with DOT Transportation Enhancement Funds, will link and enhance the pocket parks.



Rachel Marshall Outdoor Learning Lab, Keene

The Rachel Marshall Outdoor Learning Laboratory Project was designed in 1996 as a service-learning program that engages K-12 youth in the stewardship of public lands. Two thousand acres of city park land are used as outdoor learning labs. The first learning lab was a 2.5 acre wooded area of Ashuelot River Park. Students, teachers, and community leaders not only use public land for field-based study, they also maintain the sites for educational purposes while protecting its ecological integrity. Youth are involved in leadership and land management projects, such as developing an interpretative kiosk, studying a section of the Ashuelot River and its impact on land, habitat plantings, bird banding, and

publishing place-based newspaper articles. Since 1996 over 3,250 students have completed over 10,000 student days of education. Partners in this effort are Antioch New England Institute's Center for Environmental Education, Friends of the Ashuelot River Park, Harris Center for Conservation Education, the City of Keene, and the Keene School District.

To reach the initial learning lab, take Route 9 to West Street and take a left towards downtown, passing over the river. Parking is available on the left by BlockBuster Video.

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Prescott Park, Portsmouth

Facing the harbor of the Piscataqua River and adjacent to Strawberry Banke, Prescott Park exemplifies the importance of urban green spaces. Donated to the city at the turn of the last century by sisters Josie and Sarah Prescott, this multipurpose Park provides space for a host of natural, cultural, and recreational activities. The

Park features boat docks, garden paths, formal gardens with fountains, open-air theater, and the annual Prescott Park Arts Festival. New varieties of flowers are tested each summer in large demonstration gardens, created in cooperation with the University of New Hampshire, providing educational as well as aesthetic benefits.



Pond of Safety, Randolph

The Pond of Safety will continue to be a safe haven from development thanks to the USDA Forest Service Forest Legacy Program and the NH Land & Community Heritage Investment Program. Located in Randolph, the 10-acre pond is the source of the Upper Ammonoosuc River. The 10,192-acre Pond of Safety property is the only link of protected

land between the largest unit of the White Mountain National Forest and the smaller Kilkenny unit. A State-held conservation easement acquired in December 2001 will keep the property privately owned and undeveloped. An adjacent 3,200-acre tract will become part of the White Mountain National Forest.